

REMARKS

Status of the Application

Claims 1, 3, 4, 7-11 and 13-20 are all the claims pending in the application.

Claims 1, 10, 11, 13, 14 and 15 are amended.

Claims 2, 5, 6 and 12 are canceled.

Claims 16-20 are added, support for which may be found throughout the specification.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, and 13 stand objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim. The Examiner has indicated that these claims recite allowable subject matter would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Independent claim 1 is amended to recite the subject matter of claims 5 and 6. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 is in condition for immediate allowance. Independent claims 10, 13, and 15 are amended and recite subject matter analogous to claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 10, 13 and 15 are in condition for immediate allowance. Applicant further submits that dependent claims 3, 4, 7-9, 11, 14 and 16-20 are allowable at least by virtue of their dependency on claims 1, 10, 13 or 15 respectively.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 103

Claims 1, 3, 7, 10, 14, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Tults (U.S. Patent No. 6,784,943), and claims 2, 4, and 11 stand rejected under 35

U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tufts in view of Safadi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 7,050,109; hereinafter "Safadi").

Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's rejections are moot in view of the above-mentioned amendments to independent claims 1, 10, 13 and 15.

Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

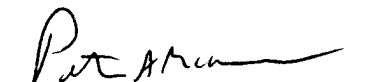
Respectfully submitted,

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE

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CUSTOMER NUMBER



Peter A. McKenna
Registration No. 38,551

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